

77843

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
Federal Bureau of Investigation
New York, New York
MAY 19, 1961

FBI

Re: Orests Berlings aka
Orests B. Berlings,
Peter

Orests Berlings, resident of 7501 Ridge Boulevard, Brooklyn, was interviewed on May 5, 1961, and he requested that the following information be kept as confidential as far as possible:

Berlings identified a photograph of Ivan Filippovich Filippov, born September 19, 1907, at Grozin, Kaluzhsk Oblast, USSR, Counselor of the Soviet Delegation to the X Session of the United Nations (UN) in New York City in 1955, as being identical with the Ivan Filippov who acted as one of his Soviet superiors in Germany in 1940-41.

Berlings stated he thought he recalled seeing Filippov's name mentioned in the "New York Times" in 1952 or 1953 in connection with a press release. He had a vague recollection of the time because he associated it with a still more vague recollection of meeting someone from the Voice of America, possibly a Rumanian individual from Berlin, who was working in the French section of Voice of America and who mentioned Filippov was in the United States. Berlings never saw Filippov in the United States and he could recall no further details.

Berlings stated that Ilmars Rupners was a close personal friend of his all his life. He has not seen Rupners since the mid-1940's, when the latter remained in Latvia to work against the Soviets.

Berlings related Ilmars Rupners was the second youngest son of a stock broker and importer who was an agricultural representative in Latvia of the Mc Cormick Company. The elder Rupners was a man of wealth, stature, and brains. When the Soviets

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took over Latvia, the elder Rupners escaped and is now living in the United States. To the best of Berlings recollection, Ilmars' mother was deported to Siberia and might have possibly died in Kolymsk.

Ilmars married a nice Latvian girl by the name of Velta Zarins. Both of them were prominent in field and track. They belonged to the substantial "upper crust" in Latvia. Ilmars' wife and son are now in New York. Berlings last met Velta Rupners in New York about five years ago.

Berlings stated that there can never be any question about Ilmars Rupners position regarding the Soviets. He is a straight Latvian nationalist and has always maintained an "all out position" against the Soviets. He is courageous, dependable, and has physical courage of the highest extent.

He has played "fantastic tricks" against the Soviets. When the "Cheka" came to arrest him on one occasion, Ilmars escaped through a two foot by one foot window. He finally was captured by the "Cheka" but escaped and obtained employment on a Kholkoz, under a false identity. He became well known and prominent in the Kholkoz in 1940-1941. He organized an underground and tried to take an active part in chasing the Bolsheviks out of Latvia.

Ilmars had strong right leanings and for a time, associated with the rightwing group Perkonkruses, an ultrapatriotic group. The prime head of Perkonkruses was Gustavs Celmins, who is presently in the United States. Rupners was associated with Celmins for a time. The Germans tried to use this organization as a Nazi front. Ilmars approached Berlings about the organization and then stayed away from it when Berlings told him what it was. For a period, Ilmars stayed away from politics entirely.

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Berlings was in contact with Ilmars until 1944, when the latter was forcibly drafted in the Latvian Legion. The group with which he was drafted was composed mainly of Berlings best friends.

Berlings stated that after the war, Rupners was discovered by the Communists and sent to a camp, but he escaped. He has been "a man with a price on his head."

Berlings stated that he does not think that Ilmars is free now. He felt that he was in the hands of the Soviets. He said that Ilmars would sacrifice his skin rather than betray a friend. He said that Ilmars impressed everyone by his personal courage so much that he is literally living on that substance.

One of Ilmars bosom friends is Berlings brother-in-law, Oswalds Porietis, former Latvian journalist and broadcaster. Porietis was twice deported to prison labor camps by the Soviets. The first time he was sent to Vorkuta, from which he was released after Stalin's death. He was subsequently released again from prison labor camp to die. His health was completely wrecked, but he somehow lived. He is now the manager of a Kholkoz, at which Berlings' mother-in-law is a bookkeeper. Porietis is living with Berlings' mother-in-law, MILDA SPUDNIS, on her farm near Stelpe, Latvia. Berlings stated that he does not dare write a single line to either of them.

Berlings stated that he had grown up in the same neighborhood as Ilmars Rupners. They went to school together, fought together, and shared all experiences together as boys and as men. He stated there was no question in his mind that Rupners has always been anti-Soviet.

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He said there was a rumor in the 1940's that Ilmars was a German spy, but he said that there was absolutely not the slightest bit of truth to this rumor.

Berlings said that he had in the past heard bits of information about Ilmars' activities and present state through Rupners' father, who still had some devious sources into Latvia, whereby he occasionally secured some information concerning his son.

Berlings stated that his cassette has been accepted by the photographic industry as a standard and in the near future, there will undoubtedly be a considerable amount of publicity concerning his cassette and thereby concerning his name in connection therewith.